

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated April 21, 2004, the Examiner has set forth a requirement for restriction under 35 U.S.C. §121, alleging that the subject matter defined by the claims of the present invention represents the following three separate and distinct inventions:

Group I. Claim 9, drawn to a compound of formula (I) wherein R is a phenyl group or a cycloalkyl group, R² is as defined, and R³ is an optionally substituted aryl or an arylalkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms within the alkyl chain, classified in class 548 and subclass 146+.

Group II. Claim 11, drawn to a compound of formula (I) wherein R is as defined, and R¹ and R² together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bonded form an unsubstituted piperidine, classified in class 546 and subclass 184+.

Group III. Claim 12, drawn to a compound of formula (I) wherein all variables are as defined in class 548 and subclass 146+.

In order to be fully responsive to the Examiner's requirement for restriction, Applicants provisionally elect to prosecute the subject matter of Group I, claim 9, drawn to a compound of formula (I) wherein R is a phenyl group or a cycloalkyl group, R² is as defined, and R³ is an optionally substituted aryl or an arylalkyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms within the alkyl chain.

Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected subject matter in this application.

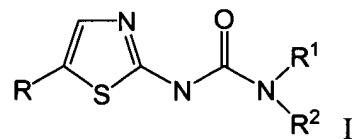
However, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.111 and 1.143, Applicants hereby traverse the Examiner's requirement for restriction and request reconsideration thereof in view of the following remarks.

An Examiner's authority to require restriction is defined and limited by statute:

If two or more independent and distinct inventions are claimed in one application, the Commissioner may require the application to be restricted to one of the inventions.

35 U.S.C. §121, first sentence (emphasis added). The implementing regulations of the Patent and Trademark Office include the mandate that restriction is appropriate only in cases presenting inventions which are both independent and distinct, 37 C.F.R. §§1.141-142. Without a showing of independence and distinctness, a restriction requirement is unauthorized. In the present application, the Examiner has asserted that Groups I-III are patentably distinct inventions. Applicants respectfully traverse.

In the instant case, the claims in Groups (I), (II), and (III) all relate to compounds having the following core structure of Formula I:



The compounds of Formula I above all share the utility of being used in the manufacture of a medicament for treating cell proliferative disorders associated with an altered cell dependent kinase activity.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that Groups (I)-(III) are different aspects of a single invention. The courts have recognized that it is in the public interest

to permit applicants to claim several aspects of their invention together in one application, as the applicants have done herein. The CCPA has observed:

We believe the constitutional purpose of the patent system is promoted by encouraging applicants to claim, and therefore to describe in the manner required by 35 U.S.C. §112 all aspects as to what they regard as their invention, regardless of the number of statutory classes involved.

In re Kuehl, 456 F.2d 658, 666, 117 U.S.P.Q. 250, 256 (CCPA 1973). This interest is consistent with the practical reality that a sufficiently detailed disclosure supporting claims to one aspect of an invention customarily is sufficient to support claims in the same application to other aspects of the invention.

Applicants respectfully suggest that in view of the continued increase of official fees and the potential limitation of an applicant's financial resources, a practice which arbitrarily imposes restriction requirements may become prohibitive and thereby contravene the constitutional purpose to promote and encourage the progress of science and the useful arts. Moreover, under the regulatory changes as a consequence of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), applicants are required to conduct simultaneous prosecution, as here, requiring excessive filing costs or to otherwise compromise the term of related patent assets.

It is vital to all applicants that restriction requirements issue only with the proper statutory authorization, because patents issuing on divisional applications which are filed to prosecute claims that the Examiner held to be independent and distinct can be vulnerable to legal challenges alleging double patenting. The third sentence of 35 U.S.C. §121, which states that a patent issuing on a parent application "shall not be used as a reference" against a divisional application or a patent issued thereon, does not provide comfort to applicants against such allegations. The Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has declined to hold that §121 protects a patentee from an allegation of same-invention double patenting, Studiengesellschaft Kohle GmbH v. Northern Petrochemical

Co., 784 F.2d 351, 355, 288 U.S.P.Q. 837, 840 (Fed. Cir. 1986). In Gerber Garment Technology Inc. v. Lectra Systems Inc., 916 F.2d 683, 16 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1436 (Fed. Cir. 1990), the court held that §121 does not insulate a patentee from an allegation of "obviousness-type" double patenting, and in fact affirmed the invalidation on double patenting grounds of a patent that had issued from a divisional application filed following a restriction requirement. Furthermore, it is far from clear that the step of filing a terminal disclaimer is available to resolve a double patenting issue that arises after the issuance of a patent on the divisional application.

All these considerations indicate that the imposition of a restriction requirement with inadequate authority can lead to situations in which an applicant's legitimate patent rights are exposed to uncertainty and even extinguished. Accordingly, to protect a patentee's rights and to serve the public interest in the legitimacy of issued patents, Applicants respectfully urge the Examiner not to require restriction in cases such as the present application wherein various aspects in a unitary invention are claimed.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that a determination to make the pending restriction requirement final must evidence the patentable distinctness of all species, one from the other, as presented by the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully urged that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the requirement for restriction and provide an action on the merits with respect to all the claims.

Respectfully submitted,



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